

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, Sept. 2, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Clothes for School Wear." Information from Miss Clarice Scott, Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: "Dresses for Little Girls", "Playsuits for Winter", and "Suits for Little Boys."

---oOo---

Here's September and school time with us already and we haven't had one chat yet about school clothes for Jane and Junior. Of course, it is warm enough weather these early fall days for summer clothes to be suitable. But it won't be long now before the children will be needing their regular fall and winter outfits. So it's high time clothes were being made at home or the ready-made ones purchased.

First, there is the problem of dresses for June who is in the first or second grade this year. What kind of frocks should she have? And how shall her mother select shoes, stockings and outdoor garments like coats, hats and so on? As for Junior, what is the best outfit for his school wear?

Weighty questions, these are, when you think how much children's health and happiness may depend on their clothes, and when you think how necessary it is to select wisely to provide the right garments at the right price.

When I want advice on children's clothing the very first thing I do is to make a call on Miss Scott, the clothing specialist at the Bureau of Home Economics. I went to see her last evening--a very warm evening it was, too, so that I found it very hard to keep my mind on winter wardrobes. But I knew that both Jane and Junior were soon going to be in dire need of these clothes. So I asked about school frocks for Jane.

"Choose washable dresses always," said Miss Scott. "Cotton materials are inexpensive and launder well and are most comfortable for school wear. Gingham, chambray, broadcloths and percales--"

"Oh, my," I thought to myself. "What's the world coming to? Cotton dresses for winter wear!" And I thought back over my early days in grade school when I wore heavy woolen dresses and long woolen underwear, beside.

But, naturally, I didn't want to hurt Miss Scott's feelings so I inquired, "Did you say washable cotton dresses for winter wear?"

Miss Scott nodded. She was firm about the cotton dresses for small school girls.

Homes and school rooms these days are kept at summer temperature all during January and February, she explained, and children are more comfortable and in better health if their clothes are suited to the atmosphere. Why not wear clothes, according to comfort, not the calendar? When the children go outside, however, they will need warm outer garments to suit the weather outside. In general, however, children are more likely to be dressed too warmly than not warmly enough."

"But in very severe climate," she added, "if wool dresses are desired, the children might wear washable wool materials like challis and washable flannel. Sweater and skirt outfits make trim, comfortable little suits for girls and can be washed."

I inquired about patterns and the cut of the dresses, Miss Scott advised only simple styles with just enough construction lines to give a good fit. Raglan sleeves to allow for freedom of movement and open sleeves without cuffs that are tight and binding.

As for colors, these may be a little less vivid than those for summer wear. Soft, gay shades are best. If patterned fabrics are worn, choose those without a very light background since such a print shows soil easily.

"Well, then, what kind of trimming should these school frocks have?"

Miss Scott believes in considering the practical as well as the artistic. So she said, "The best trimming is easy to launder and just as durable as the dress it trims. Because a little girl's dress is small, a simple color scheme and plan of decoration is most suitable and most becoming. A gay print may require no trimming at all except narrow binding to match the background and design of the material, or a bit of simple stitchery to emphasize the lines of construction around the neck. Plain colors can usually take more trim than prints, but a little yoke that looks like a collar, or just some simple well-placed stitchery is all that is needed on any dress. The most becoming dress should be only a background for the child wearing it-- should draw attention to the child and not to itself. Appliqué animals, large flowers, quantities of ruffles or any spotchy decoration makes the frock so conspicuous that its small wearer hasn't a chance to shine."

From trimmings we went into a discussion of pockets. Every little school girl should be pleased to know that Miss Scott believes that both boys and girls should have pockets on every outfit. But there's an art even in putting on a pocket. If garments are to wear well and not tear out, the pockets must be placed low enough on the skirt of the frock so that small hands cannot bear down in them, and so that they are large enough for a clenched fist to enter and withdraw without strain. Or pockets can be placed low on the matching rompers or panties.

A mother I know says that each week when she does the ironing she slips a handkerchief in the pocket of every little dress, as she irons it. Then there's no danger that her small daughter will go off to school in a fresh dress but without a fresh handkerchief.

R-H.C. 9/2/31

Now to consider the outside clothes. A beret is the most convenient and comfortable type of hat for fall and winter except in most severe weather. It is comfortable, sticks to the head whether the breezes blow or not, and is inexpensive to buy and easy to make.

For fall showers there's nothing like a nice one-piece suit with long trousers that fasten over the tops of overshoes and prevent the rain from dripping in. The best material for a rain suit is a showerproof and windproof cotton material that is closely woven and sheds water. Cravenetted suits and coats discarded by older members of the family can be cut down for the youngsters.

As for winter coats--

What's that? The time? Oh, dear me, yes. I'm just getting started on this subject of clothes and it's already past time for the menu.

Well, next week I'll tell you some more. A week from today we'll finish our conversation about outdoor clothes for little girls and then take up school clothes for boys. And, in the meantime, if you haven't yet written for a set of clothing leaflets, why not send for them? You'll want a copy of "Suits for the Small Boy", "Dresses for Little Girls", and "Playsuits for Winter."

The main dish on today's menu is that old favorite which has come into special prominence within the last few years--liver. Did you ever hear that liver is a valuable food, especially for the children? Of course, I knew you had. So for the main dish our menu today has liver and bacon; next, panned or Fried okra--another one of the unusual vegetable dishes; Stewed cucumbers and tomatoes; Baked potato; and, for dessert, A simple cake with peach sauce.

Directions for making the fried okra and the broiled peaches are right there in your green cookbook. But the stewed cucumber and tomato recipe is a special one-- a new one-- so I'm giving that to you for your notebook.

Seven ingredients:

1 pint of pared and diced cucumbers	1/2 a small onion sliced
1 quart of tomatoes, fresh or canned	2 tablespoons of fat, and
2 teaspoons of salt	2 tablespoons of flour
Pepper	

I'll repeat that list. (Repeat)

If you use fresh tomatoes, skin and cut them into small pieces. Cook the tomatoes and cucumbers together for 15 minutes--or until the cucumbers are tender. Add the salt and pepper. Blend the flour and butter and mix into it a little of the hot tomato juice. Then pour this thickening into the mixture and cook until thickened. Serve at once.

Tomorrow: "Read the Mushroom Labels".

